

MADHURA MAHAPRABHUJI



• PROF. RAMESHBHAI V. PARIKH

GRANDFATHER'S TALK

Grandfather's fondest wishes and Jai shri Krishna to all loved children, who are '**Bal-Pushti**' readers.

Within no time, our dear friend '**Bal-Pushti**' has completed two years. On your birthday, your elders and friends give you gifts and wish you happy birthday. '**Bal-Pushti**' celebrates it's birthday with a difference, by giving you a gift. It does not take a gift from anyone. This is its way of celebrating and enjoying it's birthday.

Last year, for it's first year birthday celebration, it had gifted you with '**Rangeela Shrinathji.**' You all had liked it and were very happy. So for its second year Bal-Pushti is gifting you with as good a book, '**Madhura Mahaprabhuji**'. I am sure that you will like this book, also.

After having read Shri Nathji's stories it is time to read Shri Mahaprabhuji's stories. Shri Nathji and Shri Mahaprabhuji are the be all and end all for us. When you have finished reading their stories, real love for them will awaken in you. Your faith in them will strengthen.

We have to lead our lives according to Shri Mahaprabhuji's dictates. We must do Shri Nathji's seva. There are two important facts that we must never forget. We must try to mould ourselves as Vaishnavs, the way Shri Mahaprabhuji wants us to be. In this book, you will learn all about Shri Mahaprabhuji's deeds, His travails, His grace on us, and other such aspects. So be sure to read this book not once, but again and again.

- *Rameshbhai Parikh.*

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MADHURA MAHAPRABHUJI

by

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1. A BUFFALO RECITED THE VEDAS

Read the map of India. An azure blue bay of Bengal lies in South-East Bhārat. Along it's broad coast-line, is Andhra Pradesh, which was known as *Tailang Désh* in ancient times. Here the Krishnā river flows the foothills of the *Stambhādri* mountain. 500 years ago at the South-East end of the South of Krishnā river, there was a big hamlet, Kānkarvād.

It was inhabited by a large number of Tailang Brahmins, amongst whom was a learned intellectual called Yajnanārāyan Bhatt. He was a dear progeny of *Bhardwāj rishi*, a Velnadu Tailang Brahmin. He was highly respected for His crudition and purity.

The villagers regarded Him as a 'Vedāvtār' (incarnation). They often narrated an incident also, in it's connection. An atheist, once ridiculed Bhattji, 'If the Védas are the words of God then make this buffalo recite the *Védic mantras*.'

Bhattji replied complacently, 'If God wills it, then why a buffalo, even a stone can recite. One who makes the impossible possible is God.' Then Bhattji stood up and went to the buffalo. He caressed it gently and said, 'Oh, buffalo ! recite the *Védic mantras*.' Everyone was stupefied as the buffalo stood among them and recited the *Védic mantras* loudly.

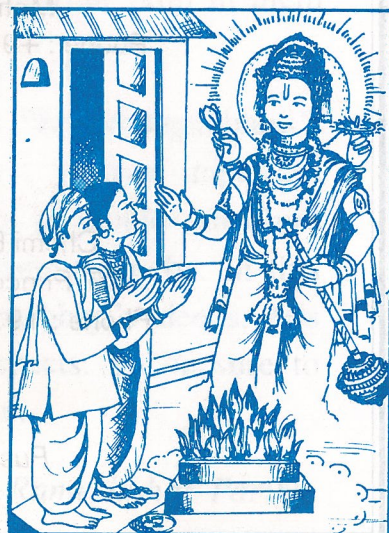
Such was the might of a true devotee like Yajnanārāyan Bhatt. •

2. GOD GRANTS A BOON

Shri Vishnumuni was Yajnanārāyan Bhatt's guru. Once he went to Bhattji's house. He spoke to Bhattji : 'Only study of the Védas will not make you attain God. Do God's *bhakti*; for only that *bhakti* will help you attain God.'

Heeding Shri Vishnumuni's advice, Bhattji started performing a Vishnu-swarūp Somyajna. He did this Somyajna with intense devotion. It was time to offer the sacrificial fruit (*Shreefal*) at the end of the Yajna. Bhattji concentrated on their family God Shri Gopal, as He offered the *Shreefal* in the fire. Instantly there Murlimanohar Shri Krishna, appeared from the yajna-fire, dressed in a *pitāambar*—yellow dhoti. With this divine *darshan* Bhattji stood in reverence and awe.

God said, 'Bhattji, I am very



God came out from Yajnakund

pleased with your bhakti. Ask for a boom.'

'Oh Lord ! having attained You, I have nothing to desire. I do not want anything but you.'

'Bhattji, your selfless devotion has impressed me even more. It is my solemn vow that when 100 Somyajnas have been completed in your lineage, then I myself will take birth as your descendant, to safeguard dharma.'

All the people in the *mandap* hailed Bhattji. In His entire life, Bhattji managed to complete 32 Somyajnas.

3. ONLY DEMI GODS IN THE LINEAGE

In any family-tree where God is going to be born, first demi-gods are born in that lineage. Yajnanārāyan Bhatt was '*Vedāvtār*'. His progeny Gangādhār, according to His name was '*Mahādēvji Avtār*.' Someone remarked sardonically – His name is Gangādhār but there is no Gangā in His hair. Gangādhārji at once untied the huge top-knot on His head. With that, Gangāji flowed forth with all Her might. This same mighty Gangādhārji completed 28 Somyajnas during His life-span.

Gangādhārji's son was Ganpati Bhatt. He was regared as '*Ganpati avatār*.' At the people's request He had created a shower of gold coins from the sky above the village. This made the people admit that Riddhi-

Somayajna in a tradional way



Siddhi's Ganpati had been born. He succeeded in completing 30 Somyajnas.

Vallabh Bhatt was His son, who was also known as Bālam Bhatt. Following in His father's tradition, He completed 5 Somyajnas. On a pitch dark night He had shown the villagers the sun, thus throwing them into dizzy spell. Thus they all called Him '*Sūrya-avtār*.'

Vallabh Bhatt had two sons; the older one was Laxman Bhatt and the younger, Janārdan Bhatt. Laxman Bhatt was known as '*Satyāvtār*' by all, because He always spoke the truth. His wife Il-lamāji was the daughter of the royal priest in the court of the king of Vijaynagar, in South Bhārat. His

name was Susharmāji. So his daughter Illamā and Laxman Bhatt got married. Laxman Bhatt was able to complete 5 Somyajnas, which also meant that the 100 Somyajnas in the lineage were complete.

4. NO PARMĀTMĀ WITHOUT SEVERE PENANCE

Laxman Bhatt had two sons and two daughters. But there was no sign of God taking birth. His faith started wavering, as He plunged into ponderous thought. The yajnas may not have been performed correctly, that is why God had not taken birth. The village folk taunted Him that as if God was roaming idle. As if He would appear just because yajnas have been performed.

Laxman Bhatt was utterly despondent and detached Himself from the world. He left home to become a mendicant. He went to Kerālā to His guru Prémākar muni who said, 'God never fails to keep His asservation. God can never be attained without severe penance (*tāp*). Maintain your severity for God. Then He will definitely take birth as your son.'

Laxman Bhatt returned home. He was only waiting for God to appear. He had a friend called Shankar Dixit, who came to him one day and said, 'Bhattji, for so many births we have been committing sins. One does not get 'moksha' (Libera-

tion) until all of one's sins not been purged. But 'tirth-yātrā' (pilgrimage) absolves one of all sins. So I have resolved to go on an extensive pilgrimage to Kāshi, Prayāg, Gayā.'

'Shankar, even my previous sins are a hindrance to my spirituality which is why God is not taking birth as my son. Come, I shall also join you, since two is company.'

Laxman Bhatt entrusted His children in His younger brother's care. Accompanied by wife Illamāji, their first halt was, Prayāg.

Prayāg is where the confluence of Gangā and Yamunā take place. There they met with a 'diwān' called Krishnadās. Bhattji blessed him so he would have a son. Krishnadās at once made Bhattji his guru. Then, Bhattji proceeded to Gayā. He performed 'shrāddh' for His forefathers and went to Kāshi, where He decided on a long stay. He got themselves a house. Later, to make the completion of the 100 Somyajnas, He fed the Brahmins of Kāshi. It was in Kāshi that He experienced



Laxman Bhatt, going to Native town with his wife

peace. Soon Illamāji was pregnant. Now Laxman Bhatt had an inner conviction that God will definitely be born.

5. GOD TESTS HIS DEVOTEES

About six months elapsed in Kāshi. Bhattji was happy and content. But one day bad tidings ended it all. The muslim emperor in Delhi, had deployed his troops to plunder Kāshi. The people of Kāshi fled to save their lives. Laxman Bhatt too, took His wife and headed for the native land. Some of their relatives also fled with them.

Illamāji was pregnant and ill. The bullock cart ride was tiring. It proved to be rather uncomfortable for her. But braving the sudden changes, they plodded on slowly.

During the journey, they both had the same dream one night. God gave them darshan. Then He took on the form of a child and gave darshan as Shri Bālkrishna. God even said, "Very soon I will be born as your son. When I appear as your

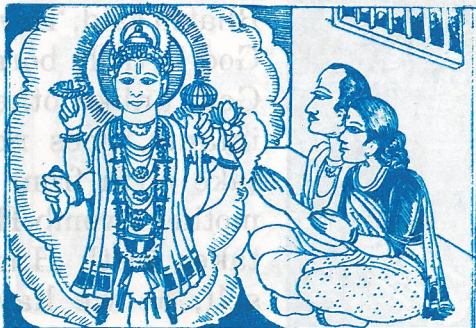
son, make me wear this 'tulsimālā'." God gave them 'tulsimālā'.

Bhattji and Illamāji were so overjoyed that God was going to appear. Their elation made them oblivious of their sorrow.

Their journey brought them to a dense forest Champāranya, in Madhya Pradesh. It was dusk when they arrived. It was wild and devoid of any co-habitation there. Also, the other travellers had made long head way. Illamāji's contractions started. Left with no choice, they had to break journey there. Night descended on the thick forest. There in the black night, Illamāji delivered a child under a tree. It was a 7 month - premature baby. But the baby was lifeless at birth. In that dark night, she tore off a piece of her saree and wrapped the baby in it. Then she put it in a cave like hollow of a tree and covered it with leaves.

They both were saddened. The joyous feelings of the dream vanished, as they bore their misfortune with fortitude. But it was dangerous to linger in the forest, so chanting God's name, they walked on.

Wearily, after a some miles, they reached a small town. Hearing the name of the town as Chaudā, Bhattji recalled that it was Krishnadās Diwān's town. Nightfall found them at the diwan's haveli. They spent the night there. Once again God ap-



God's darshan and command : 'Bring me together'

peared in their dream at night. He said, 'Go back to where the baby was born. You will find me there as your son. Take me with you.'

The couple were again joyous. Every ordeal was put behind them. Dawn saw them retracing their steps to Champāranya. •

6. JOY HAS COME TO NAND'S HOUSE

The two of them hurried to Champaran. They tried to locate the exact rest spot of the previous night. Their search brought them to *Mahā* river where there was oh, so many *shami* trees. Illamāji searched desperately in every tree for a cave like hollow. Suddenly they both espied a scene a short distance away. They both were awe struck. They saw a pit of fire measuring about 8-10 hands in length. The fire burned brightly as the tongues of the flames leapt in the air. This confounded them, but they

ran towards it. They saw soft sand from the river bed spread in the centre of the fire pit. In this soft sand they saw a new born baby, divinely beautiful, lying on an orange cloth ! The baby was holding His right toe with His hands and sucking it. He was chuckling and gurgling with delight. He was dark wheat coloured with thick curly locks covering His head. His eyes were large and sparkling even as the forehead was high, with a '*Kastūri*' *tilak* adorning it.

The baby's darshan, was a source of joy and bewilderment. Illamāji said, 'This is my baby, because just seeing it, my breasts are oozing milk.'

'Dévi, the fire is protecting the infant. If the infant is your's then the fire will surely pave the way for you. Go fearlessly.'

Illamāji prayed as she walked ahead. The fire disappeared. She picked up the baby and cradled it tightly to her chest. Then she placed Him in Bhattji's arms. As He looked at their son, Bhattji said, 'Dévi, God is truly born. God, unlike other infants, does not take birth from a mother's womb. He takes birth Himself, as we have ourselves been



through the experience.'

There the sky was filled with demi-gods in their chariots, descending from their abodes, all singing and hailing the Lord's birth. As they sent down a shower of flowers, they glorified God. This brought the ascetics, who were in meditation in the forest, running to the scene. They started reciting and chanting Vedic mantras. The entire divine and supernatural Vrajdhām gathered at Champāran; a grand 'Nandmahotsav' (Lord's birth celebration) was celebrated with glorious splendour. Everyone took turns to rock the new born infant. Bhattji and Illamāji were in rapturous ecstasy.

7. SHRI VALLABH AS PURUSHOTTAM

Laxman Bhatt performed the ritual of 'chatthi' (when a goddess Vidhātā comes and writes the child's future on a blank paper) He made His horoscope too. They named their child Vallabh, which means dear. He was going to become dear to everyone, so He was called Vallabh.



Hearing the Teacher, Krishnadās in search of God

It was at this time that Madhvānand Brahmachāri was in meditative penance (tāp) in Kāshi. When he heard a voice from Gangāji, 'Go to Champāran for Vraj-leela darshan. God has Himself taken birth there.'

Close to Ajmer is Pushkar Tirth, where a devotee named Mukunddās lived. God was pleased with him. He too instructed Mukunddās, 'Go quickly to Champāran for God's darshan.'

In Uttar Pradesh, by the shores of the Gangā in Soram village, Kēshavānandji had many pupils under his tutelage. Coming out of *samādhi*, Kēshavānandji told them: 'Right now God has taken birth on earth. But I cannot locate the exact place.'

Hearing guruji's words, a disciple named Krishnadās Meghan immediately took off to seek God.

Shri Vallabh was born in V.S. 1535 (i.e. 1479 A.D.) on *Chaitra vad ekādashi* at noon. It was a Sunday. Exactly at that very day and time Shri Govardhannāthji's swarūp appeared atop Shri Giriraj mountain in Vraj.

8. AN INCREDIBLE CHILD-LEELĀ

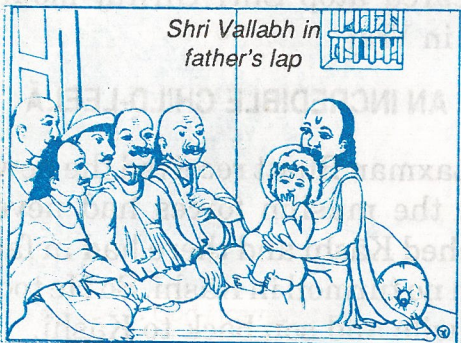
Laxman Bhatt received the news that the muslim forces had never reached Kāshi and there had in fact been no turmoil in Kāshi. So He took His wife and son back to Kāshi.

Laxman Bhatt used to bring the all famous toys of Kāshi for Child Vallabh to play with. These toys were brightly coloured. Child Vallabh used to pick out only two toys from the whole set. One was a white cow and the other was Shri Krishna's swarūp. He used to stroke the cow gently and adoringly, while He held Krishna's statue close to His chest.

Soon Vallabh started crawling. He was forever running to father. When father was busy teaching pupils, He would pick up the ream of papers and start reading them.

As He grew just a little older, He stopped looking at His toys. He preferred to sit with Father's '*pothi*' (loose book) and rambled ceaselessly. Seeing this prompted the pundits of Kāshi to comment : 'A son's qualities showing from the cradle.' Vallabh will grow to be a great scholar. He will become a dear devotee of the Lord and great protector of cows.'

An astrologer looked at Vallabh's soles and proclaimed, 'Both soles have 16 symbols. God also had the same 16 symbols. Thus your son is



not an ordinary mortal, but He is
Balkrishna Himself.’

By now He was 5 years He had not been talking till then. This worried His mother deeply. One day Shri Kāshi Vishwanāth Mahādev came in the guise of a sadhu. He asked Shri Vallabh, 'God, what form have you taken ?'

In reply, Shri Vallabh spoke for the first time in Sanskrit : 'Almighty God acts only according to His will.'

His parents were unduly shocked to hear these words for the first time from Him. He had started accompanying His father to all the *pandits*. He listened to religious debates and discourses and at times even gave solutions in one sentence, in a crisis over the final decision. Naturally the learned priests were dumbstruck but were compelled to admit, 'Shri Vallabh is *Vākpati* (gifted with erudite speech).' Many addressed Him as '*Bal-Saraswati*',

One day, the children from the neighbourhood came to play with Shri Vallabh. They said, 'Come, let us play king and queen. Vallabh, you become the King.'

Vallabh said, 'No, I will become a *guru*. You all become '*Shishyas*'. I will tell you all stories about God.'

One morning, on arising, Shri Vallabh found the entire household with gloomy downcast expressions. He saw that everyone's favourite

cow 'Payodā' had died. Shri Vallabh went to the cow, caressed the cow. and said lovingly, 'Payodā, get up. I want to drink your milk.' Immediately Payodā stretched herself and got up. Everyone realised : 'Shri Vallabh is just not like other children. He is God Himself.'

Then, one morning, Laxman Bhatt returned after 'Gangā-snān'. He noticed Shri Vallabh talking to another child in their courtyard. That child was Sagundās. He was from the neighbourhood and belonged to a low-caste. Bhattji called Shri Vallabh to Him and said, 'Vallabh, Sagundās is not a Brahmin like us. He is shūdra. You must only play with Brahmin children.'

Shri Vallabh replied inoffensively: 'Father, you read the Bhāgvat everyday. In that it is clearly stated that all human beings are a part of God, so they should not be discriminated against. Everyone is entitled to the devotional path. Isn't this right ?'

'Yes, You are absolutely correct.'

'Then, God is also in Sagundās. He is no different from a Brahmin. Then why can't I play with him ?'

Laxman Bhatt was at a loss for words. This is the way, child Vallabh grew to be 5 years old. •

9. SHRI VALLABH'S INDOCTRINATION

It was Laxman Bhatt who started Shri Vallabh's indoctrination, when He was 5 years. He handed His son

a slate and chalk. First Shri Vallabh was taught numerics. On the first day Shri Vallabh started writing 'Shri Krishna.' Bhattji narrated the *Bhāgvat*, *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārat* to Shri Vallabh daily. These were absorbed and retained by Shri Vallabh easily.

Now He was 8 years. On *Rāmnavmi* day, His father initiated Him with the 'Janai' (sacred thread worn by Brāhmins) Shri Vallabh had become a *Brahmachāri*. Complying with His father's orders, He went to study at His guru's *āshram*. His guru's name was Vishnuchit. 8 year old Vallabh lived in His guru's *āshram* and served him assiduously. He was indoctrinated in the four *Vēdas* by His guru.

There after, Bhattji sent Him to Nārāyan Dixit to study the other scriptures. Shri Vallabh studiously mastered all the remaining scriptures. He also gained priceless knowledge from Tirumalji, an erudite scholar. Thus having acquired knowledge of all the scriptures from



Shri Vallabh as a student

His father and three gurus, in the end He went to Mādhavendra Yati. He went to this guru's āshram to study scriptures of the Vaishnav dharma. So He studied the *Gita*, *Bhāgvat*, *Brahma-sūtra* etc.

In a short span of 2 years, Shri Vallabh had studied and learnt every scripture. He was an erudite scholar now. All His gurus annunciated, 'He is no ordinary child. We all feel that Lord Krishna has come to our āshram again, to study. In the process of studying, He expatiates on religious debates or discourses with us. In future, He will definitely be a saviour for *Hindu dharma*.'

10. SHRILAXMANBHATTATAINS GOLOK

When Shri Vallabh completed His indoctrination He was 10 years. Laxman Bhattji decided to go on a pilgrimage to South India. He was also keen to visit His native place and go for *darshan* of their family deity Lord Bālāji.

They set out together on a yātrā. They reached Tirupati. There, as Laxman Bhatt was doing Lord Bālāji's darshan, rays of light emanated from Bhattji's chest. His *ātmā* (soul) merged with Shri Bālāji. Everyone grieved for their loss. Bhattji was cremated there. The rest of the family went to Vijaynagar without Laxman Bhatt. It was there, that Shri Vallabh requested to part

company with His mother, maternal uncle and older brother, 'I want to go on a pilgrimage covering entire Bhārat. I want to do all the tirths' darshan, and participate in religious talks, debates and discourses. Please grant me permission.'

With great difficulty, He got everyone's consent. Shri Vallabh set out on a Bhārat-yātrā. •

11. SHRI VALLABH'S BHĀRAT-YĀTRĀ

Shri Vallabh was only 10 years old. At that age no child leaves his parents and even steps outside the village limits. Here was Shri Vallabh, on a *Bhārat-yātrā*. He kept three asservations : (1) I will not wear any footwear. (2) I will not wear any stitched clothes. I will only



Shri Vallabh with four disciples on a pilgrimage

wear a dhoti and uprena. (3) On the yātrā I will camp out side the city and village boundaries, under a tree. As far as possible I shall avoid living in the village or city.

He was accompanied by four of His Father's followers. Shri Vallabh used to carry Thākorji's 'Jhānpī' (special box for Shri Thākorji) on His head. He used to cook His own food. He used to offer it to Shri Thākorji and then eat. He led a simple and regulated life.

His pilgrimage started from Kāshi. He reached Chitrakūt first. His onward journey brought Him to His birthplace Champāran. There He recited the entire Shri Bhāgvat. Then He proceeded to Vriddhinagar



Dāmodardās Harsāni becomes Shri Vallabh's follower for life-time

(at present, Vardhā) city, where He made Kapurchand Harsāni's younger son Shri Dāmodardās His sévāk and took him along. This Dāmodardāsji was present in Champāran when Shri Vallabh was born. From there Shri Vallabh moved on to Kānkarvād. He met with the family. His next halt was Vijaynagar where His maternal relatives lived. On the way He met Pushpadant, who was a learned intellectual. There was a dialogue with Shri Vallabh, who should be worshipped : *Ganpati* or *Gopāl* ?

Shri Vallabh elucidated from the Gita shloks, that only Shri Krishna's sévā and pūjā should be done. The simple reason being that all the other demi-gods and goddesses have originated from Shri Krishna. By worshipping Shri Krishna, all the other lesser gods and goddesses' sévā and pūjā is done. So Ganpati need not be worshipped separately.

From there Shri Vallabh reached Mangalprasth village, where He did Pannā Nrûsinhji's darshan. The next halt was Tirupati, where He got Shri Bālāji's darshan. Whenever He entered into a debate with any intellectual, He triumphed.

Crowned with victory after victory on His pilgrimage, Shri Vallabh arrived in Vijaynagar, which was being ruled by king Krishnadēv. This was a large Kingdom in South India. On Shri Vallabh's arrival, the King

ordered a congregation to have a religious discussion. It was decided that the one who emerged victorious over the rest would be felicitated by the king and he would become his devotee.

11 year old Shri Vallabh entered the assembly hall. Everyone was wonder struck. For 28 days, Shri Vallabh was engaged in religious debates and discussions with leading scholars, āchāryas and intellectuals. All those elders were defeated and Shri Vallabh's victory was acclaimed by all.

The king kept his promise by performing the Kanakābhishèk ceremony in honour of Shri Vallabh. He had 100 man of gold flowers put into



The Kanakābhishèk ceremony in honour of Shri Vallabh at Vijaynagar

a pot, containing the pure waters from all the rivers. This was used for the ceremony. All the intellectuals bestowed the title of 'āchārya' on Shri Vallabh. This made Shri Vallabh Bhārat's fifth āchārya. He was preceded by *Shri Shankar*, *Shri Ramānuj*, *Shri Madhva* and *Shri Nimbārka*. King Krishnadèv and his entire family became Shri Vallabh's sèvaks. Thus Shri Vallabh succeeded in squashing other's opinions and ideologies which made Him establish His philosophy of '*Shuddhadwait Brahmavād*.'

King Krishnadèvrai gifted all the gold from the Kanakābhishèk ceremony to Shri Vallabh. Sacrificial by nature, He refused to accept it. He had it apportioned to the Brāhmins. He only retained the king's 7 gold coins. These He used to make anklets for Shri Vithalnathji and offered them to Him. This was Shri Vallabh's magnanimous and sacrificial nature.

On His pilgrimage of the South, Shri Vallabh reached Vishnukānchi. There was a beautiful temple of *Varadrāj Swāmi*, where He went for darshan. He noticed that on all the temple steps, Bènāgl's famous devotional poet, Jaidèv's *Ashtapadi* of '*Geet Govind*' had been carved. Just the way God's swarūp cannot be touched by our feet, even God's name cannot be touched by our feet. So Shri Vallabh bowed in reverence from

outside and returned. At night, God appeared in that temple's priest's dream and said, 'Have brass plates put on the temple steps. This will prevent devotees from sinning by walking on my name.'

The following day Shri Vallabh revisited that temple. Where He saw the steps covered with brass sheets. Yet He crawled on His knees and went inside the temple, without putting His footprints on the steps for God's name was beneath the brass. It was in this manner that Shri Vallabh entered Varadrāj's temple for darshan.

In the South He faced opposition from fanatic militants. Once He met a dull sort of mendicant, who showed his yogic prowess by halting the sun's

and moon's movements. In retaliation one of Shri Vallabh's faithfuls, by His sheer divine prowess, made that yogi stick to the ground. As a result he could not budge an inch by himself. Shri Vallabh ordained : 'Do not perform miracles to impress upon others. Miracles do not bring a metamorphosis in people's lives. For a positive change in other's life, one must import true knowledge.'

There was yet another yogi who tried to display his yogic skills to Shri Vallabh. He boasted, 'I can fly in the sky with my yogic powers.' In Shri Vallabh's presence, he made an attempt, but lauded with a bang on the ground. His yogic powers failed him and he was compelled to turn away shamefacedly.

In one place the Shaivites had an altercation with Shri Vallabh and His followers, but they lost. They came to fists and blows. Shri Vallabh ordered, 'These people are intolerant fanatics. Oppose them.' To face the challenge, His devotees released sling shot stones. They did it so skillfully that no one in the opposite camp was hurt, but they all fled. Then Shri Vallabh explained, 'Although we should be merciful to all, we must also not stand helplessly with joined hands, if we are attacked without provocation. We should fight according to our duty in adversity. One who will not learn civility will have to be taught by physical means.'



Shri Vallabh conquers Pandits

Shri Vallabh reached *Tāmraparni* river. About two villages away was a big city. The royal priest of that city came to Shri Vallabh. He said, 'Mahārāj, our king is afflicted with plague. Despite all remedies, he remains uncured. A *tāntric* (one versed in witchcraft) has had a demonic statue of the king's proportion made from gold. If a Brahmin accepts this statue as charity, the king will recover, but the charity receiver will perish. Many Brahmins in their lust for gold have come to accept this charity. But once the demon emerges from the statue, lifesize, they all turn tail and run. Will you please save our king?'

Shri Vallabh obliged by going to the royal court, where He was given a grand reception. To accept the charity, Shri Vallabh took some water in His hand for '*sankalp*.' he behold, that demon emerged from the statue. He showed Shri Vallabh one finger as Shri Vallabh at once showed 3 raised fingers. The demon bowed to Shri Vallabh and walked away silently. The king's fever normalized immediately.

He urged Shri Vallabh to accept the gold statue. Shri Vallabh advised him thus: 'Have it broken into pieces and distribute the same to among the Brahmins. I do not accept any one's charity.' Shri Vallabh also revealed that the demon, by raising one finger was posing a question, 'Do

Shri Vitthalnāth commands Shri Vallabh to marry



you perform '*sandhyāvandan*' once a day according to ritual?' To which Shri Vallabh showed 3 fingers indicating that 'I do '*sandhyā-vandan*' thrice a day: In the morning, afternoon and evening. This made him bow and leave.' This incident also drew cheers for Shri Vallabh.

His pilgrimage brought Shri Vallabh to *Pandharpur*. •

12. YOU ARE FATHER, I AM SON

In *Pandharpur*, Shri Vallabh camped on the shores of *Bhimrathi* river where He recited *Shri Bhāgvat*. Shri Vitthalnāth of *Pandharpur*, came to Shri Vallabh. He told Shri Vallabh, 'Now it is time for you to get married. Your descendants will liberate the souls of the people.'

That same moment, Shri Goverdhannāthji also appeared. He too ordained Shri Vallabh the same advice, 'You get married. I want to be born as your son. There are still so many souls waiting to be liberated.'

Shri Vallabh was desirous to lead a bachelor's life. But it occurred to Him that He should act to please

God. Thus it was solely for God's happiness that Shri Vallabh decided to get married. After 9 years He completed His first Bhārat-yātrā. In these 9 years, Shri Vallabh covered entire Bhārat, i.e. from Kanyākumari to the Himālayas and from Jagannāthpuri to Dwārkā. •

13. MIRACLE IN MATHURĀ

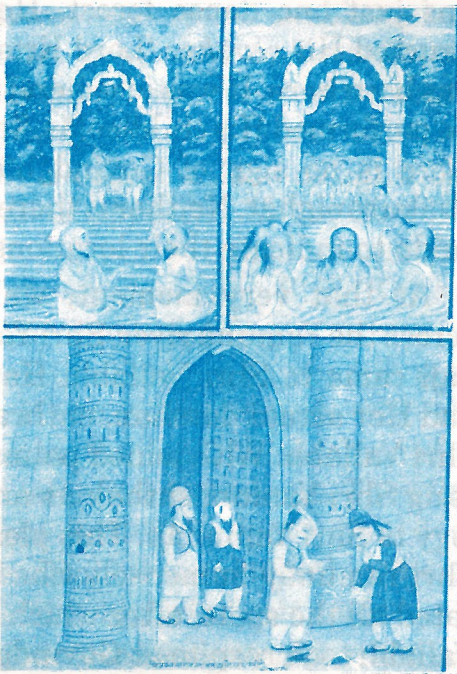
In the course of His first pilgrimage, Shri Vallabh reached Mathurā. Otherwise, a bustling city of pilgrims, Mathurā was unnaturally quiet. Shri Vallabh learnt that the governor of Mathurā was a muslim. He had had a mantra written on a paper, which had been pasted at *Vishrām Ghāt*. This mantra affected the Hindus crossing to Vishrām

Ghāt. Their '*chotis*' (small plaits at the back) would get cut off. Instead they started growing beards like Muslims. This was antithetical to dharma. Consequentially Hindus felt restricted from going to Mathurā and bathing in Yamunāji.

This news prompted Shri Vallabh to head towards Vishrāmghāt, with His sèvaks. They were followed by the citizens of Mathurā. It was by the sheer divine might of Shri Vallabh that no-one's '*choti*' was cut off, neither did anyone grow a beard. Naturally everyone present shouted praises of Shri Vallabh and Shri Yamunāji.

Then Shri Vallabh gave another paper to two of His devotees, and despatched them to Delhi. This resulted in the Muslims, passing by, having their beards disappearing and turning into a long '*choti*' on their heads. The emperor in Delhi Sikander Lodi, was informed about this. He summoned Shri Vallabh's sèvaks. They protested in self justification : 'We have no cause for animosity with you. We respect all religions. But each one must live one's own religion faithfully. Let us live according to our religion, while you live according to your's. If you remove the paper from Mathurā's entrance; then we will reciprocate your action here.'

The emperor understood their message. He acted in accordance. It



(Above) Yantra on Vishrāmghāt
(Below) Yatra at Delhi Gate

was because of Shri Vallabh's divine intervention that the Hindu society once again restored with dignified resolution.

14. HONHĀR PAINTS SHRI VALLABH'S PORTRAIT

There was a famous artist in emperor Lodi's service, whose name was Honhār. His greatness could only be exemplified thus. Two men would stand, holding a tightly stretched cloth between them. Honhār would race towards them on horseback and succeed in drawing a straight line across that cloth. To achieve this feat, with a pen on horseback was remarkable. This gifted Honhār, went to Vraj, in search of Shri Vallabh, who had left Mathurā for Gokul. So the artist also reached Gokul.

Honhār was highly conceited about his talent. He remained in hiding as he started on a portrait of Shri Vallabh. Despite repeated attempts, he was unsuccessful in accomplishing the portrait. Realization dawned on him and his pride



Shri Yamunāji's darshan at Gokul

vanished. He approached Shri Vallabh and bowed in humility. Shri Vallabh granted permission and the portrait was completed immediately. Shri Vallabh explained : 'God has endowed us with many powers. But they belong to God, not us. So no human being should be haughty about his divine powers. Rather they should be utilized in God's service.'

This portrait of Shri Vallabh still adorns the Kishanghar palace, which is a short distance from Ajmer.

15. SHRI YAMUNĀSHTAK'S COMPOSITION

When Shri Vallabh reached Gokul, it was desolate. Not a house and not a human being in sight. It was just one dense forest. He instructed His *sèvaks* : 'Lord Krishna was born here. It was also here, that He performed His childleelās. Today there is no sign of Govindghāt or Thakuranighāt. Neither is there any guide to indicate their locations.'

At that very moment, walked across the Yamunā river, Shri Yamunāji came to Shri Vallabh. Having had Her actual darshan, enthralled Shri Vallabh. With joined palms He sang Shri Yamunāshthak as an eulogy to Shri Yamunāji. This pleased Shri Yamunāji immensely. She indicated all the spots, after which Shri Vallabh took respite at Govindghāt. It was at the age of 14 that He composed **Shri Yamunāshthak**.

16. GOD GAVE BRAHMA-SAMBANDH MANTRA,

In the course of His week long stay there, Shri Vallabh recited Shri Bhāgvat. But one thought rankled Him everyday : 'God has sent me to liberate His blessed souls, on earth. Already 14 years have passed. All I am seeing here are wicked people who are also sinful to the core. If a dirty cloth touches a clean cloth, that touch does not purify the dirty cloth. Instead it taints the clean cloth. How do conjoin the wicked sinful beings with God who is pure ?'

This thought stayed with Him for a week; By then the *Bhāgvat* recitation was over. It was the night of *Shrāvan sud ekādashi*. Shri Vallabh was restless and unable to sleep. But He continued to lie still with eyes shut. Time crept to midnight. Suddenly the still black night was lit by a brilliant flash of light. Shri Krishna appeared before Shri Vallabh. He was overjoyed to get Shri Krishna's darshan. Shri Krishna spoke, 'I am giving you a mantra, called the Brahma-sambandh mantra. If you initiate people with this mantra, they will be absolved of all their sins and wickedness. Then they will be suitable to become my devotees. I will always hold their hands and then liberate their souls.'

Shri Krishna gifted Shri Vallabh with the Brahma-sambandh mantra. In return Shri Vallabh offered

an orange '*pavitrā*' (a necklace made from cotton thread) and '*misri*' (rock sugar). He paid homage by chanting '*Madhurāshtak*.'

The following morning, His own sèvak, most dear to Him, Dāmodardās Harsāni was initiated with the Brahma-sambandh mantra. In order to explain Shri Thākorji's command, Shri Vallabh wrote '*Siddhānt-Rahasya*.' He taught this scripture to Dāmodardās. •

17. SHRI VALLABH'S SECOND KANAKĀBHISHÈK

Shri Vallabh had reached the kingdom of Orchhā in Madhya Pradesh. It was being ruled by king Rāmbhadradev. A '*tantric*', called



Shri Vallabh conquers Ghat-Saraswati
in the court of King Rāmbhadradev at Orchhā

Second Kanakābhishèk by king of Orchhā



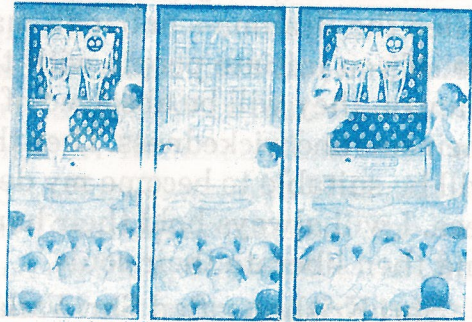
Ghat-Saraswati came to his court. He had caged Goddess Saraswati in a big pot. She was compelled to speak whatever he ordered her to say. With Her assistance, Ghat-Saraswati successfully defeated many an intellectual. At his request, king Rāmbhadrādèv held a religious assembly. Once again, with Saraswati Dèvi's help, Ghat-Saraswati emerged victorious. Hearing about this, Shri Vallabh reached the assembly. Ghat Saraswati's deceit failed to work in front of Him. Saraswati Dèvi although imprisoned in the pot, spoke in favour of only Shri Vallabh. Totally defeated, Ghat-Saraswati made an exit, while everyone hailed Shri Vallabh's glory. The king, honoured Shri Vallabh further, by performing

the 'Kanakābhishèk' for Him. The scholars crowned Him with the title of 'āchārya' and did 'tilak' on Him.

18. SHRI VALLABH IN JAGANNĀTHPURI

His pilgrimage brought Shri Vallabh to Jagannāthpuri, where He did Lord Jagannāthji's darshan. It was *Ēkādashi* that day. As He was doing darshan, a devotee came and put some of Shri Jagannāthji's *prasād* in His hand. According to the prevalent custom there, one could not refuse *prasād*. But it was *ekādashi*, so the fast could not be broken. Shri Vallabh resolved His religious dilemma expertly. The entire *ekadashi* day-n-night, Shri Vallabh stood there. As He stood, He sang the praises of Lord Almighty. The following day, *bāras*, at the crack of dawn, He ate Lord Jagannāthji's *prasād*. This is how proficient Shri Vallabh was, when the question of preserving 'dharma' arose.

The then king, Gajpati also convened a religious assembly. He put



Paper, pen and inkpot put before Lord Jagannāthji

forth 4 questions to the gathering :
 (1) Who is the greatest God ? (2)
 Which is the greatest scripture ? (3)
 Which God's *mantra* is the greatest?
 (4) Which is the greatest *karma* ?

This created heated dissensions among the intellectuals and scholars in the assembly. Shri Vallabh propounded, 'Let us obtain the answers from Lord Jagannāthji Himself.' A blank sheet of paper, pen and ink were placed in front of Shri Jagannāthji. The Lord's written reply was : (1) The greatest of all Gods is Dēvki's son, Shri Krishna. (2) The greatest scripture is the Holy Geeta, sung by Shri Krishna Himself. (3) The greatest mantra is His name. (4) The greatest karma is His *sevā*. These answers greatly satisfied everyone. They were pleased. King Gajpati also felicitated Shri Vallabh.

19. SHRI VALLABH TOOK ON MANY FORMS

Shri Vallabh reached Ujjain, which was also the city of Sāndīpani rishi's āshram, near *Kshiprā* river.



Shri Vallabh in as many forms as Brahmins

It was here that Shri Krishna had acquired His education. When Shri Vallabh reached there, He could not spot a single tree. Accidentally a *peepal* leaf came flying and fell at his feet. Shri Vallabh dug into the ground, planted that leaf in it and watered it. In a few minutes, that leaf turned into a large *peepal* tree. People thronged to get darshan of this miracle.

So many Brahmin scholars came to have religious debates. They all were hopelessly defeated. The following day a large group of 200 Brahmins reached there. Each one started questioning separately. Shri Vallabh said, 'If each one of you asks a question in turn, then we can have an organized discussion.' But none heeded the advice. They persisted in talking aloud together. Shri Vallabh took on as many forms as Brāhmins present and then quietened them. Shamfacedly all the Brahmins went away. This was the miraculous feat, which Shri Vallabh performed.



A small temple on Shri Girirāj

20. SHRINĀTHJI'S ORDER IN HIS DREAM

Shri Vallabh and ShriNāthji appeared simultaneously on earth, in Champāran and Girirāj respectively. ShriNāthji had instructed the Vrajvāsis, 'You all will not take me out now. I will come out when I so desire.' When Shri Vallabh was on His Bhāratyātrā, ShriNāthji appeared in His dream one night. He ordered, 'You come quickly to Girirāj. Bring me out and do my sèvā.'

Shri Vallabh left immediately for Girirāj. He rested at Sadu Pāndè's house, in Ānyor, on a porch. The next morning He went atop to Girirāj mountain. Shrijibāvē and Shri Vallabh went forward to greet one-another and their momentous *Pratham milan* took place. Then Shri Vallabh brought out Shrijibāvē's swarūp from the grone in the mountain. With the Vrajvasis' help, built a small temple from cow-dung and mud. Having enshrined Shrijibava inside, He started doing His sèvā.

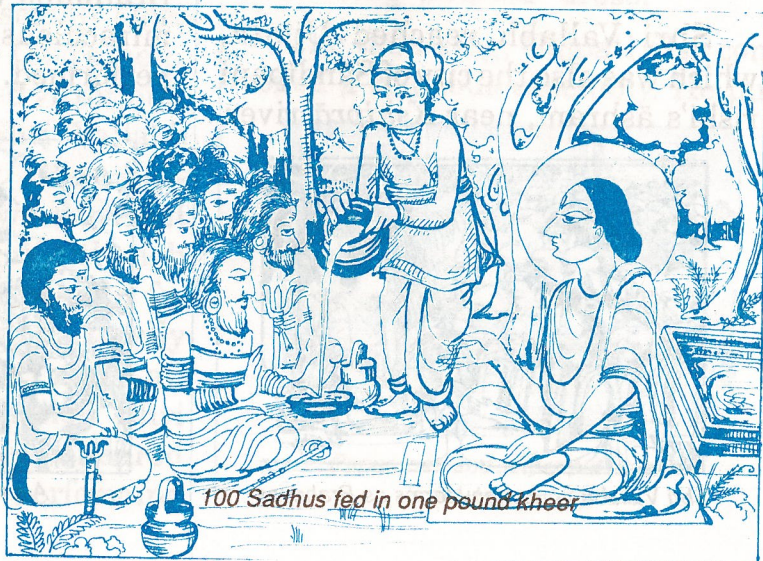
ShriNāthji wanted to be in a bigger temple. There was a jeweller named Puranmal in Punjāb. Shrijibāvē commanded him to build a temple. As instructed by Shri Mahāprabhuji, an architect, Hiramani, was called from Agra.

The temple construction started and reached halfway. Puranmal's funds ran dry. With Shri Vallabh's consent, he set out to earn more money. Having earned enough, he returned to complete the temple. Shri Vallabh enshrined Shriji in the new temple and started doing sèvā.

21. A STONE-COW ATE GRASS

In Vraj, there was a village near *Bahulāvan*. At the edge of Krishna-kund, there was a stone-cow. The villagers used to do pūjā of that cow everyday. The muslim provincial chief, stopped them from doing the pūjā. He argued : 'If the stone-cow eats grass, then I will allow the pūjā.'

Shri Vallabh arrived on the scene. He had a sheaf of green grass placed by the tail of the stone-cow. He chanted a few Vedic mantras and then sprinkled that holy water on the cow. At once, the cow came to life and non chalantly turned around to



100 Sadhus fed in one pound kheer

eat the grass. This made the Muslim provincial chief bow in humility, to Shri Vallabh. He permitted the cow's pūja, even as the people hailed Shri Vallabh vociferously.

22. 100 SADHUS FED ON ONE 'SHÈR' (POUND) KHEER

Shri Vallabh was on a Vrajyātrā. One day, at one location. He prepared a 'shèr' of 'kheer' from milk. He offered it to His Thākorji. Just then, an ascetic called Chaturā, arrived there with his 100 disciples. They all were also on a Vrajyātrā. It was time for lunch, so he spoke to Shri Vallabh, 'You are an āchārya, whereas we are mendicants.'

Shri Vallabh finished with the sèvā of feeding Thākorji, and seated everyone to partake of the prasād. He gave each one a leaf cup (*padiyā*) and served kheer in it. As He kept serving kheer, the vessel kept refilling. It just did not get empty. All the sadhus ate kheer to their hearts' content and they all burped with a sense of fulfilment. Yet the vessel with kheer did not empty itself.

Shri Vallabh said, 'This is the miraculous effect of God's mahāprasād, if we offer mahāprasād with a true loving heart then we never run short of it. Everyone can eat contentedly.' What in actuality Shri Vallabh conveyed was that, 'If we have a surprise guest we must feed

him properly. To feed the hungry, is dharma. Always take care to see that noone leaves our house hungry.'

23. SHRI VALLABH AND SHRI CHAITANYA MEET

Shri Krishna Chaitanya, a Krishna devotee from Bengal met Shri Vallabh at Mānsigangā in Vraj. They both met with joy filled hearts. They sat to discuss religious. Shri Chaitanya said, '*Kaliyug* is brimming over with countless sins. It is all areligious. Still there is one redeeming quality about it. In times like this, if a human being were to chant God's name with a true heart, he is sure to attain salvation.'

Hearing this Shri Vallabh countered by saying, 'I am not agreeable to what you have said. Agreed that in *Kaliyug* a human being can attain salvation by chanting God's name, but if we inadvertently fail to remember God even for a second, like a mustard seed on a cow's horn, we will surely be corrupted by *Kaliyug*.'

Shri Vallabh explained that everyone should chant 'Shri Krishna: sharanam mam' mantra continuously.

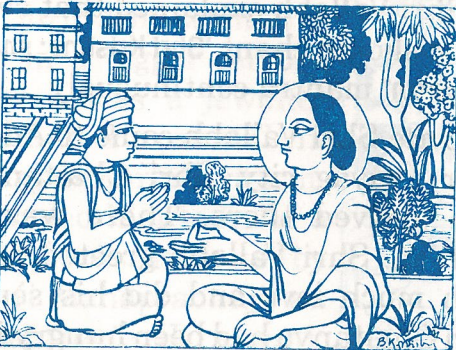
Once Shri Vallabh came to Adèl, near Prayāg city. Shri Chaitanya also arrived there. There was a reunion. Shri Vallabh greeted him with much love and did his sèvā. Shri Chaitanya had been hungry for 3 days. Shri Vallabh had prepared

food for Shri Thākorji, which he offered him, without offering Shri Thākorji first. His guest ate and left. Shri Vallabh cooked another meal and offered Shri Thākorji 'rājbhog.' Shri Thākorji said, 'Today I have eaten 'rajbhog' twice. I was dwelling in Shri Krishna Chaitanya's heart while he ate the rājbhog.'

Shri Vallabh has explained that, 'Always receive and greet a devotee who comes to your house warmly and fully.'

24. SHRI VALLABH'S GUJARAT YĀTRĀ

Shri Vallabh passed through Pushkar, crossed over Abu mountain and reached Gujarat. From Siddhpur He proceeded to Pātan, where the Jain āchāryas (scholars) came to have religious debates with Him. But Shri Vallabh's devotees themselves had the debate and defeated them. Many Hindus and Jains became Shri Vallabh's sèvaks. In Pātan, Shri Vallabh was honoured with a yātrā of the city.



Treat children as God : advises Shri Vallabh

Having toured, Shri Vallabh went to Saurāshtra, Kutchh and finally reached Sindh. •

25. SHRI VALLABH'S LOVE FOR CHILDREN

A teacher named Krishnadās Kāyasth lived in a village. He taught children with brutal force. He did not have an ounce of mercy for the children. One day, a child fainted due to his beating. Krishnadās was scared. Shri Vallabh happened to be passing by from there and He felt compassion for that child.

He recited a Vedic mantra and sprinkled that purified water on the child. It revived the child. Shri Vallabh said to Krishnadās, 'Brother, children are a part of God. They are tender as flowers. You cannot beat and torture them. Love these children not illtreat them.' Krishnadās' mistake dawned on him. He became Shri Vallabh's devotee.

Next Shri Vallabh arrived in Tagdi, near Dhandhuka in Gujarat. He rested by the lakeside. closeby lived a Brāhmin. In the morning, the Brāhmin came out from his house and spoke to Shri Vallabh, 'Mahārāj, see Rām-Krishna are eating butter.' Shri Vallabh peeped into the hut. He saw the Brāhmin's two sons, enjoying eating butter in their mother's absence. The Brāhmin said, 'When their mother returns after filling the water, she will beat these two to pulp.'

Shri Vallabh replied, 'You do not worry. God graces everyone with good sense.' The Brāhmin's wife returned from filling the water. Looking at the children, the similar feelings were invoked in her that Rām-Krishna were eating butter. Shri Mahāprabhuji expounded the situation to them : 'God dwells in children, so you must shower love on them. Do not beat or chastize children. Cook and feed children with delicious food.'

Shri Vallabh reached Sindh, where there was a town called *Nagarthatthā*. *Aluhānā* family lived there. A boy in this family was afflicted with an incurable disease. His body had been infested with sores all over. There was virtually no hope of him surviving .

This tragic condition melted Shri Vallabh's heart. He gently touched the boy, *Nariyā*'s forehead. With His touch *Nariyā*'s body suddenly recovered from the disease. Shri Vallabh started calling him *Nārāyandās*. He



Shri Vallabh and Padmanābhdās

took him in His fold and made him a *sèvak*.

26. SHRI BHĀGVAT IS SHRINĀTHAJI'S INCARNATE

Once Shri Mahāprabhuji had gone to Kanoj. There, there was a renowned Bhāgvat narrator, called Padmanābhdās. As he was narrating the Bhāgvat Kathā. Shri Vallabh stopped a while to listen. Seeing the divinity emanating from Him, Padmanābhdās became His follower.

Shri Vallabh ordained that, 'Padmanābhdās, God exists in two forms in this universe : In name and form. We do God's *sèvā* in His beauty and *swarūp* form. We do not trade in the name or *swarūp* of God. We do not use *sèvā* as a means of livelihood. Similarly God's name is also God's *swarūp*. God exists in His name also. So just the way it is a sin to earn by selling God's *swarūp*, it is equally sinful to trade in God's name. More so, because Shri Bhāgvat is a veritable incarnation of ShriNāthji's name and form. Hence forth, you



Shri Vallabh's marriage at Kāshi

will not earn your daily bread by narrating Bhāgvatji. You can engage in another vocation to fill your stomach.' Padmanābhdās at once solemnly promised as he said, 'From this day onwards, I will never make Shri Bhāgvat Kathā narration my means of livelihood.'

27. SHRI VALLABH'S WEDDING

Shri Vallabh completed His second Bhāratyātrā within 5 years. Both yātrās were completed over a span of 14 years. Now Shri Vallabh was 25 years. After completing the second yātrā, He reached Kāshi, where He stayed with His mother. Dēvam Bhatt, from His caste, came to see Him. He said, "Shri Vitthalnāthji in Pandharpur came in my dream and commanded me, 'Marry off your daughter Mahālakṣmi to Shri Vallabh.' So I have come to you." Shri Vallabh consented to the marriage proposal after getting His mother's approval. His relatives from His native place were invited. Shri Vallabh was married to Shri Mahālakṣmiji on *Ashādh sud pancham* with great pomp and fanfare. After the wedding, Shri Vallabh stayed awhile in Kāshi, then set off for His third Bhāratyātrā.

28. KRISHNADĀS' TWO QUESTIONS

One day Krishnadās Meghan posed questions to Shri Vallabh : (1) Mahārāj, what is dearest to Shri Thākriji ? and (2) What does Shri

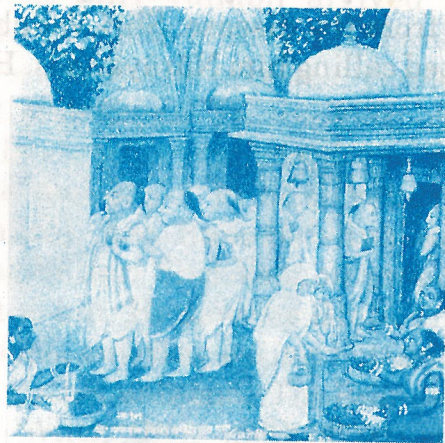
Thākriji dislike most ?

Shri Vallabh replied, 'Two things are most **dear** to Shri Thākriji. One is butter and the other is a devotee's love as sweet as butter, for Him. and Two things are most **disliked** by Shri Thākriji. One is the smoke from the firewood, the other is our dissensions and infighting.'

Shri Vallabh explained, 'A Vaishnav should never participate in any kind of clash or fight. This makes God within us, very unhappy. A Vaishnav should always have loving feelings for Shri Thākriji and only do His sēvā.'

29. SHRI VALLABH IN ADĒL

Shri Vallabh completed His third Bhāratyātrā in 4 years. It took about 18 years to complete 3 yātrās. He had now reached 30 years of age. He decided to settle in a quiet place with His family. He made this decision because He hardly got any time



Scholars of Kāshi reading 'Patrāvlamban' text pasted on the door of Kāshi Vishwanāth's Temple

to do Shri Thākorji's sèvā, due to the constant influx of intellectuals in Kāshi. They came to Him everyday for religious discussions. More so, Shri Vallabh was very keen to write a commentary on Shri Bhāgvat and a tranquil place was exactly what He needed. So one day Shri Vallabh decided to clarify His position in the form of a long letter, called '*Patrāvlamban*.' He ordered one of His devotees, 'Paste this letter on the door of Kāshi Vishwanāth Mahādev temple. All scholars and intellectuals are to be instructed to read this first and then come to me.' After reading that lengthy letter, none of the intellectuals dared to venture near Shri Vallabh. Thus, He succeeded in annihilating *māyāvādis*



Shri Vallabh dictates Mādhav Bhatt Kāshmiri.
Seated along with Mēghan, Prostrating Damlāji

and established the principle of '*Shuddhādwait Brahmvād*.'

Then Shri Vallabh went to Prayāg. Closeby, on the banks of Shri Yamunāji, there was Adèl. He used to write His scriptures there and succeeded in composing many. Among these were *Anubhāshya*, *Tatvārthdeep-nibandh*, *Shri Subodhiniji*, *Shodas Granth* etc. In His writing, He was assisted by a Vaishnav Mādhav Bhatt Kāshmiri. His speed in writing equalled Shri Vallabh's flow of words. In this way, Shri Vallabh was able to accomplish many scriptures.

There are 2 main points, which Shri Vallabh has explained in all these scriptures: (1) *Shuddhādwait* and (2) *Pushtimārg*. Shri Vallabh has clearly stated that Parmātmā is truth. Nothing preceded or existed before Him. After the extirpation of the universe, only He will remain. Hence Parmātmā is '*sanātan*'.

He elucidated another important point i.e. all animate beings are a part of God. They have been separated from God. The embodied soul is a servant of the Master – Parmātmā. So it is imperative that every embodied soul – '*jeev*' should do Parmātmā's sèvā.

The third point that He emphasized was : Parmātmā has created this universe for His own sport and pleasure, from Himself. Therefore Parmātmā is Truth and as a natural

consequence, so is this creation the universe. Parmātmā exists in every animate and inanimate being in this world.

The fourth point that He explained was that 'In this world nothing belongs to us. Everything belongs to God. Everything happens only because of God's will. Hence we should never be arrogant about our strength and talents. We should be detached and not claim ownership to anything as 'this is mine.' Pride and attachment are an illusion.'

Moreover He preached that God is an embodiment of love. One who loves God will in turn be loved by God. God can only be attained through love for He graces those

who love Him. The path of God's grace is Pushtimārg. In Pushtimārg, every Vaishnav should be initiated with the Brahma-sambandh mantra and do Shri Thākorji's sēvā and constantly remember Him. This is all that is required of a Vaishnav.

30. SHRI GOPINATHJI'S BIRTH

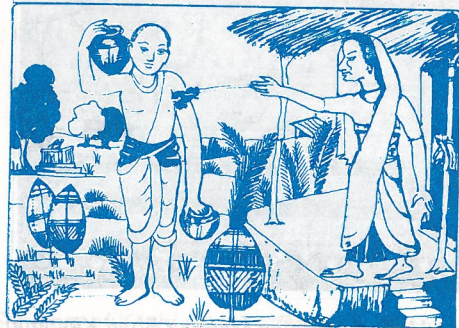
Shri Vallabh's first progeny was born on V.S. 1567, It was an auspicious day *Bhādarvā vad bāras*. Shri Vallabh was 32 years old. He named His first son Shri Gopināthji. From childhood Shri Gopināthji was quiet, obedient and showed scholastic aptitude. Daily He used to read Shri Bhāgvat 'pāth' and then eat his meal.

31. SECOND SON SHRI VITTHALNĀTHJI'S BIRTH

After approximately 4 years, Shri Vallabh went to a forested place, Charnāt, close to Kāshi and lived there with His family. There His second son, Shri Vitthalnāthji was born in V.S. 1572, on *Magsar vad nom* (9th day). At that same time, a



Shri Gusāiji in Shri Vallabh's lap



Old woman throwing dirty cloth

Brāhmin from Kāshi came to visit them. He presented Shri Vallabh with a swarūp of Shri Vitthalnāthji. After getting darshan, Shri Vallabh said, 'Today, God as Shri Vitthalnāthji and devotee, in both forms, has graced my house.' His second son, later became famous as Shri Gusāiji in Pushtimārg.

32. SHRI VALLABH'S MERCY

In Adèl, Shri Vallabh had an old woman, of His caste, as His neighbour. But she was envious by nature. When Vaishnavs prostrated in front of Shri Vallabh and did His sèvā, she would burn with jealousy. She was unable to express His envy. The old woman harassed Shri



Medicine brought by Damlāji is thrown into fire.
Thus, He proved His divine fire form.

Vallabh's sèvaks. When they used to go and fill water, she would throw dirty rags of things at them. The sèvaks had to rebathe. They complained to Shri Vallabh about her. He instructed them, 'Whatever the old woman throws at you, clean it and bring it to me.'

One day, a sèvak, Devā Kapur, brought a piece of cloth. Shri Vallabh ordered, 'Use this piece of cloth in lighting the oven fire. Once her cloth is used in Shri Thākorji's sèvā, her heart will be purified.' With that action, the old woman came to her good senses. She was in remorse for her past behaviour, Shri Vallabh always preached, 'Man is not wicked, it is his mind and thoughts that are wicked. Act favourably to those who dishonour you. Forgiving a sinner will reform him.'

33. A DIVINE FIRE FORM

One day Shri Vallabh was seated under a tree outside His hut. Many of His devotees sat facing Him. Seeing Shri Vallabh's agonized facial expression, Dāmodardāsji said beseechingly: 'Looks like you are physically indisposed and in pain. If You permit, I can bring some medicine.'

'Damlā, today the stomach is hurting.'

Damlāji brought back the medicine. It was winter time and a fire burned closeby. Shri Vallabh threw

the medicine into that fire, much to everyone's amazement. In hardly a second, the painful expression disappeared from Shri Vallabh's face. He had a bemused smile on His face. Dāmodardāsji at once understood His divine fire form. •

34. ENTHUSIASM FOR BHĀGVAT NARRATION

Shri Vallabh derived great joy in narrating God's leelās. He was always enthusiastic about it. He spent every afternoon and evening, narrating God's leelās to Vaishnavs. In addition to this, even during His Yātrās, He always kept alive God's leelā when He spoke to Dāmodardās. If there was a lapse in the course of the conversation He would immedi-



God's command to come back in Nityaleelā

ately ask Dāmodardās, 'Damlā, it has been a long time since we discussed God, isn't it? Come, Let us start again.' •

35. GOD'S COMMAND TO RETURN IN NITYALEELĀ

Once on His Vraj-yātrā, Shri Vallabh had halted in Madhuvan. He used to dictate His commentary on Shri Bhāgvat, called Shri Subodhiniji, to Madhav Bhatt. Three chapters had been completed. It was time to commence the 4th one, when Shri Balkrishnalal appeared in front of Him. He sat comfortably in His lap and said, 'Vallabh, I am overly keen to hear my leelās. So leave the other chapters, and you start with the 10th chapter. I want to hear it. Also now, I do not like it without you in 'nityaleelā.' You are close to completing your mission. So hurry back into nityaleelā.'

Shri Vallabh complied with Shri Thākorji's instructions and commenced Shri Subodhiniji's commentary on the 10th chapter. His yātrā brought Him to the confluence of Gangāsāgar in Bengal. It was there that He had completed the tenth chapter of Shri Subodhiniji and was contemplating on starting with the 11th one. Once again Shri Thākorji gave Him darshan and ordered, 'Vallabh, enough. This is sufficient. There is no need to write any more because these 'Jeevs' do not need anything more than this. You have

accomplished all my 3 commands : 1. You have liberated the pushti souls. 2. You have vanquished māyā-vādis and established Pushtimārg. 3. You have expounded the essence of Shri Bhāgvat in its requirements. Now you return to nityaleelā.'

Shri Vallabh became pensive, 'Let me at least complete the 11th and 12th chapter of Shri Subodhini. But He suffered the loss of Mādhav Bhatt, who died there. The writing work remained incomplete. In Adèl, Shri Thākorji commanded Him for the third time, 'Now do not prolong even for a day, return to nityaleelā.'

Shri Vallabh was 52 years old. It was *Vaishākh* of V.S. 1572. He composed a scripture in self-chastisement, called '*Ant:karan-prabodh.*' He addressed Himself, 'Listen to me carefully. You have committed the grievous sin of not obeying God's commands thrice. Now you must bow to the command of the Bhāgvat. Krishna is the Master, you are His servant. Always remember this.' •



Shri Vallabh's advice to the family
before renunciation

36. SHRI VALLABH'S RENUNCIATION

According to the tenets and tradition of Varnāshram dharma, Shri Vallabh decided to enter the path of renunciation. It was important to seek the wife's consent before undertaking renunciation. He sought Shri Mahālxmiji's permission. Despite repeated persuasion He failed to get her consent. So He performed a miracle. Being the divine incarnate of fire form, He sparked off a fire and burned down His hut. It was then that a frightened Shri Mahālxmiji spoke 'Run, run.' Shri Vallabh accepted these words as her consent, and made preparations to leave Adèl for Kāshi.

He reached Kāshi, where He took 'Sanyās' act of renouncing the world, at Hanumān Ghāt. He stayed there. As a *sanyāsi* He got the name of Purnānand. He stayed thus for 41 days. During the last remaining 7 days, He kept '*maun*' (not to speak at all) In V.S. 1587, on *Ashādh sud beej*, at noon, He decided to enter into nityaleelā. That morning, His two sons, Shri Gopināthji and Shri Vitthalnāthji accompanied by many Vaishnavs, went to the ghāt for His darshan. Shri Gopināthji was 15 years and Shri Gusāiji was 11 years old. They both appealed to their father, 'Give us the last message as to what we have to do.'

Shri Vallabh did not have any money or any other wealth to leave

as inheritance for His sons. All He had was divine principles as accumulated wealth. Shri Vallabh summarized the entire principles of Pushtimārg, in exactly 3 and half shloks, during His last moments. Bound by His vow to keep 'maun', He traced the letter in the sand with His finger. These shloks are called '*Shikshā-shloki*' in which Shri Vallabh has preached, 'You all must for ever remain devoted to Shri Krishna. Always have selfless love and devotion for Him. Remain constantly in His *sèvā* and *smaran* – remember Him. Know Him as your Lord, Master and benefactor.

If you all ever leave His *sèvā* and *smaran*, you will definitely be corrupted and drown in the wordly tidal waves. You will suffer irreparable loss. If You do His *sèvā*, He will bless with happiness.'

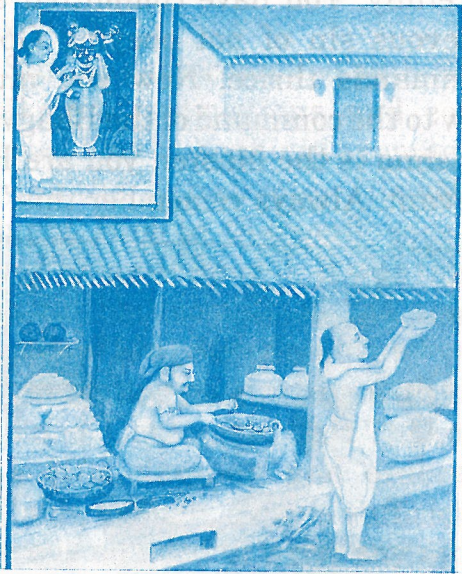
To everyone's surprise, Shri Goverdhanāthji appeared there at that time. He commanded, 'Shri Vallabh, it is absolutely correct. If You all have unstinted and unflinching faith in me then you need not fear at all. You have no cause to grieve any loss either.'

It was noon. Shri Vallabh walked to the centre of the Gangā. He stood immersed in the water. With His eyes shut, He meditated on Shri Thākorji. To everyone's disbelief, a blinding rod like light descended from the sun. It spread all around

Shri Vallabh. In a few seconds the light vanished so did Shri Vallabh as He merged into eternal nityaleelā. Flowers were showered from heaven, as the demi-gods played their drums to herald Shri Vallabh's return to His celestial abode. •

37. SHRI VALLABH IS PRESENT TODAY ALSO

Having witnessed Shri Vallabh merging into the unknown, a despondent Vaishnav went away to *Hājipur*, near *Patnā* in Bihar. There he met Shri Mahāprabhuji's *sèvak* Bhagvāndās and apprised him of what had occurred a few months ago. The Vaishnav sobbed heavily as he spoke. Bhagvāndās consoled him by saying, 'Dear Vaishnav, Shri Vallabh is still here in every Vaishnav's house in His divine form, and He



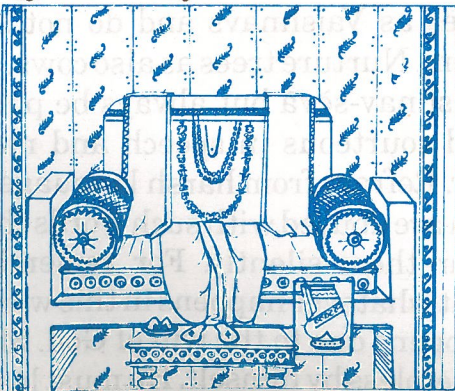
A *Sèvak* of Shri Mahāprabhuji named Rāmānand Pandit offers *jalebi* to Shri Nāthji

will be so permanently. You need not be dijected. If you are patient, you will get *utthāpan darshan* shortly.' During *utthāpan darshan* by Bhagvāndās' grace, that Vaishnav got divine darshan of Shri Vallabh.

A Vaishnav called Madhusūdan-dās lived in Kāmvan. He used to sit at Krishnakund and do Shri Vallabh's *sèvā* at the baithak and reciting Shri Sarvottam stotra. He continued to do so for 6 months. Shri Vallabh was so pleased with him that He gave him darshan every day.

Another blessed *sèvak* of Shri Vallabh, Shèth Purushottam-dās lived in Kāshi. He was not present when Shri Vallabh attained His heavenly abode via Gangāji. The simple reason being that he used to get Shri Vallabh's divine darshan everyday in his house. He was also completely immersed in Shri Vallabh's *sèvā*, of His divine swarūp.

Shri Vallabh also graced his dear blessed Dāmodardās, with darshan every three days.



Shri Mahāprabhuji's Bèthakji

Till today, every blessed Vaishnav is graced with Shri Vallabh's actual darshan. It can be concluded that Shri Vallabh dwells forever in a blessed Vaishnav's heart. •

38. SHRI VALLABH'S BAITHAKJI

During His Bhāratyātrā, Shri Vallabh had stayed at many holy places. At many of these places He had recited the Vēdas, while at two other places He had recited Vālmki's Rāmāyan. At some places He had recited the Geeta. His greatest number of *pārāyans* – recitation, was that of Shri Bhāgvat. In each one of these places Shri Vallabh still lives in His supernatural form. Hence the baithakjis came into existence at these places. Baithak literally means a place to sit or live. Shri Vallabh has manifested His divine strength and powers at each and every place. The baithaks number 84 totally. These baithaks can be visited anywhere from Kāshmir to Kanyākumari and from Dwārkā to Jagannāthpuri. However the larger number are in Vraj and Gujarat. •

39. SHRI VALLABH'S SÈVAKS

Shri Vallabh had a large following of *sèvaks*. Wherever He went, many men with their families surrendered to Him and become His *sèvaks*. These included kings, diwāns, governors, intellectuals, scholars and farmers too. There were many from lower castes, who be-

came Shri Vallabh's sèvaks. His followers numbered in thousands. His hand-picked main Vaishnavs were 84, about whom stories have written and told, that 84 Vaishnavs' stories.

40. SHRI VALLABH'S SCRIPTURAL COMPOSITION

It is believed that even Shri Vallabh's compositions numbered 84. However all these works are unavailable today, only about 30 are at hand. His main scriptural compositions are *Anubhāshya*, *Purva-Mimānsā-bhashya*, *Gayātri-bhashya*, *Tatvārthdeep-nibandh*, *Shodash Granth*, *Shiksha-shloki*, *Panch-shloki*, *Madhurāshtak*, etc. All these have been written in Sanskrit in *sūtrātmak shaili*. They are difficult to comprehend. Many an exegesis have been written in Sanskrit on all these scriptures. Today all these works have been translated into Gujarati. So be sure to read them when you are older.

41. SHRI VALLABH'S CONTRIBUTION TO HINDU DHARMA

Shri Vallabh had resuscitated hope and life in the Hindus who had been oppressed, tyrannized and demoralized to a state of abysmal despair and neurotic fear by the Muslim rulers. He reinstated faith and courage in them. By establishing Pushtimarg, He added a new

dimension to Hindu dharma. He showed the path of sèvā on the lines of dharma and joy. He revealed and proved to the world that the universe is not illusory, hence there is no need to escape from it. It is God's creation. God's beauty is contained in this creation. Accept it and experience God's beauty in this universe. He also advocated the need to relinquish prejudices pertaining to high and low caste.

Every embodied soul is a part of God and everyone has equal liberty to do God's *bhakti*. It is not imperative to run to temples for *bhakti*. You can worship God as your son, friend or another relationship in your own house. Remember Him constantly. While your hands are kept busy, let your mouth recite His name. Be sure you have an equanimous regard for all living beings in the world. Have regard and regard mercy for all. Above all do not be violent towards any living being.

God is in trees too, so regard trees as Vaishnavs and do not axe them. Nurture trees as also cows. Do Vaishnav-sèvā but always be polite and courteous in speech and manner. Refrain from harsh language. If you are abused with such words then bear them silently. For remember that whatever happens in this world, happens due to the will of God. Man is helpless by himself. He must learn to accept and see God's will in every-

thing functionary. Be humble and modest about any good deeds done. Abstain from wrong thoughts and actions. Above all never be proud about wealth, knowledge, beauty and children. Do not cause misery and pain to others unnecessarily. Feed others and then eat prasad. Lead a simple regulated life without frittering it away on the transient pleasures of world. Be not daunted in the face of adversity, for these trials and tribulations are an essential and permanent aspect of life. You should not ask God for anything and do not beg. Rather lead a dignified life by earning by the sweat of your brow.

Do not ever earn money by fraudulent or deceitful means. Use your wealth in Shri Thakorji's seva and for others benefit. Do not hoard wealth. These are the pearls and gems of wisdom which Shri Vallabh has left as a legacy for this universe.

To day it is widely accepted, that Shri Vallabh's sevaks are totally one crore spread globally. 515 years have passed since Shri Vallabh's birth and still His presence is felt as a divine form, even today. He is our Gurudev. It is by His grace that we have got Brahma-sambandh and seva. Let us prostrate with love and humility at our Gurudev Mahaprabhuji Shri Vallabh's lotus feet. Last but not the least let us mould our lives according to His message and preachings.

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HAVELI at VRAJ

A cultural nucleus of Hinduism in Americas

॥ नीत अहीं आनंद ओछव थाये, मळे मनने विश्रामजी, कहे 'श्रावणी' धन धन जेने, जोयुं आ व्रजधामजी ॥